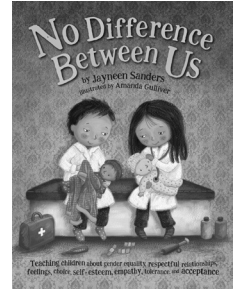


3 Lessons in Gender Equality and Respect



FOCUS TEXT: *No Difference Between Us* (ages 2–9 years)

Depending on the age of the children, the following lessons will take place over three sessions. Please adapt the lessons to suit the needs and ages of the children.

KEY OBJECTIVES

Children will understand that:

- people are essentially the same — we all have likes, dislikes, fears, worries, etc.
- gender does not dictate our likes and dislikes
- gender does not dictate our career paths.

In these lessons children will:

- discuss the ways in which we are all the same
- realise that the small differences between us are not based on gender, but on individual likes, dislikes, strengths and weaknesses
- understand that we are all equal — we have more in common than our differences

- understand that gender differences are social constructs which need to be actively broken down.

For the lessons you will need:

- *No Difference Between Us* (book)
- music and speakers
- large sheets of poster/butcher's paper
- coloured pencils, textas
- whiteboard, markers
- A4/A3 paper
- resource master: '*Similarities: Self-portrait*'

Lesson 1: Looking for Similarities

Tuning In: Musical Statues — Grouping Similarities

You will need: music and speakers

This game is a variation on the standard Musical Statues. Have students dance to the music, and when the music stops, they should freeze and listen to the instructions. They then form their group and sit down together as quickly as they can. Instructions may include:

- Find 1 to 2 other people who have the same hair colour as you.
- Make a group of 2 or 3 people who have the same eye colour as you.
- Find someone who is wearing the same colour socks/top/pants as you.
- Make a group of 3 to 4 people who have about the same hair length as you.
- Find 1 to 2 other people who are about the same height as you.

- Make a group of 5 to 6 people that are the same age as you.
- Make a group as big as you can of people that have the same number of legs/fingers/arms as you.

Note: students do not need to 'go out' in this game. Select group numbers to suit the number of students in the class, trying to not leave anyone out. Allowing a range (i.e. find 1 to 2 other people...) allows for increased inclusion.

Independent Task: Self-portrait

You will need: resource master 'Similarities: Self-portrait' (possibly enlarged to A3)

Have students complete resource master 'Similarities: Self-portrait' by using the outline provided to create a self-portrait, and by completing the 'similarity' sentences. Students may make similarity links with other students in their class, with members of their family or other people within their community, i.e. I have brown eyes like Zac, I have blonde hair like my sister, and so on.

Note: this activity could be completed on a blank piece of paper if students prefer. They can draw their self-portrait and develop their own 'similarity' statements around the portrait. For younger students, one to two similarity statements may be enough.

Reflection

Ask students to sit in a circle and share their self-portraits. If time allows, have students volunteer to share their 'similarity' sentences with the class. Self-portraits may be displayed in the classroom.

Lesson 2: No Difference Between Us

Tuning In: Stand Up If ...

Have students sit in a circle on the floor. Tell them to stand up when they hear a statement that applies to them. Then they can sit back down and wait for the next statement. Select options from the list below or develop different options to suit students.

Stand up if...

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| • You have brown hair. | • You like the monkey bars (or other popular piece of playground equipment). |
| • You have freckles. | • You like maths. |
| • You like reading books. | • You like cooking. |
| • You like basketball. | • You have two thumbs. |
| • You ate toast for breakfast. | |

Whole Class Activity: In-depth Reading

You will need: No Difference Between Us by Jayneen Sanders

Read *No Difference Between Us* to the class. Discuss the internal questions, allowing one to two students to provide a response to each question. Further discussion questions are located on pp.30–31; please select questions relevant to the class and to suit the available time.

Whole Class Game: Would You Rather ... ?

You will need: an open space in the classroom

Have students stand in the middle of the open space. Say, 'I am going to give you two options, and you need to move to the option that best suits you. Would you rather...?' Select options from the list below, or develop new options to better suit students' needs. If students select the first option, they should move to the left side of the room; if they select the second, they should move to the right.

- Listen to music or watch a movie?
- Bounce a ball or bounce on the trampoline?
- Ride your bike or ride your scooter?
- Swim in the sea or in the swimming pool?
- Go to a playground or go to a play centre?
- Have a cat or a dog?
- Climb a tree or play in the sandpit?
- Play 'hide and seek' or play 'catchy'?
- Play an instrument or sing?

Reflection

Have students sit in a circle and discuss anything they found interesting or surprising in the 'Would You Rather...?' activity. Then prompt them with some of the following questions:

- Did you always make the same choices as your friends? Can friends like different things and still be good friends?
- Can boys and girls like the same activities?
- Do these tiny differences matter?
- What would happen if everyone liked the same things and we were all good at the same things?

Note: lead the discussion into valuing both our similarities and differences as they make us who we are and make our society function — these are based on individual preferences not gender.

Lesson 3: Seeking Equality

Tuning In: Brainstorm 'Things We Like Doing'

You will need: a whiteboard and markers

Draw a Venn diagram on the whiteboard (ensure the overlap section is quite large), with the heading 'Things We Like Doing' and 'Boys', 'Girls' and 'Both' as the categories. Say, 'We're going to use this Venn diagram to record all the similarities and differences between the things girls and boys like doing. These could be things children do at school, at home or as an out-of-school activity.' Use the 'think-pair-share' strategy to develop thoughts — have students think about the things they like to do, then have them discuss their thoughts with a partner (30 seconds each) and lastly, have students take turns to share their ideas with the class. As ideas are shared, write these in the gendered sections of the Venn diagram; however challenge students' ideas, e.g. one of the girls may say she likes dancing, so 'dancing' is written in the 'Girls' section of the Venn diagram. Then, ask, 'But are there any boys here who also like dancing? Are there boys at your dance school? Do you know boys who like to dance? So, where should dancing go?' On completion, the Venn diagram should have blank 'Boys' and 'Girls' sections and lots of different ideas in the 'Both' category; allowing students to see that there is no gender segregation in the things they like to do.

Independent Task: When I Grow Up

You will need: paper and coloured pencils

Have students think about the kind of job/s they might like to do when they grow up, and why they would like this kind of role/s. Then, have them create a drawing or representation of themselves within that role/s. They could then write an accompanying sentence stating why they would like to have that job/s.

Optional Activity: Guest Speaker

If there is a member of the community who has a job which challenges gender stereotypes, e.g. a female police officer, a male nurse, a male hairdresser, etc. invite them into the classroom to talk about their job and the kinds of roles and responsibilities they have within their role. Also, have them talk about the reasons why they decided to pursue this career path and how they got to where they are now.

Reflection

Ask students, 'Is there really any difference between boys and girls? The things they do? The things they like? Their feelings? Their dreams for the future?' Discuss the need for us all to be inclusive and respectful towards others — regardless of gender — and to set the example to others in our lives.

Teaching notes written by Yale Mercieca

Similarities: Self-portrait

I have _____ hair (style)
like _____ .

I have _____ hair (colour)
like _____ .

I'm about the same height
as _____ .

I have _____ eyes
like _____ .

I have five fingers
like _____ .

I have five fingernails
like _____ .

I'm wearing _____
like _____ .

I have _____ socks
like _____ .

One of my favourite things
to do is _____
like _____ .

My favourite food
is _____
like _____ .